

Application No. 10/713,004
Amendment dated April 11, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed January 11, 2005

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and remarks is respectfully requested. In the present response, claims 1, 3, and 11 have been canceled, and claims 2, 4-6, and 8-12 have been amended. Claims 2, 4-10, and 12 remain pending in this application.

Formal matters

The Abstract of the Disclosure has been objected to because of the presence of the phrase "Figure 1" immediately following the text of the abstract. In response, Applicant has requested deletion of "Figure 1." Accordingly, the Abstract of the Disclosure is now believed to be in compliance with all formal requirements.

Claims 1-6 and 8-12 have been objected to due to various informalities. In response:

- (i) Claims 1, 3, and 11 have been canceled; and
- (ii) Claims 2, 4-6, 8-10, and 12 have been amended, substantially in accordance with Examiner's suggestions.

Accordingly, pending claims 2, 4-10, and 12 are now believed to be in compliance with all formal requirements.

Substantive matters

Claims 1 and 11 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Knobloch (U.S. Patent 6,043,612). These rejections are now moot in view of Applicant's cancellation of claims 1 and 11.

Claims 2-10 have been indicated as allowable, if rewritten in independent form and if amended to cure the formal objections to claims 1-6 and 8-10. The present amendments to

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claims 2, 4-6, 8-10, and 12 cure all formal objections. Claims 2 and 6 have been recast in independent form to include all limitations of claim 1. Claim 3 has been canceled, and its subject matter has been incorporated into amended claim 2. Claims 4, 5, 9, and 10 have been amended to now depend on claim 2 (rather than claim 1). Claims 7 and 8 remain dependent on their respective intervening claims (i.e., claims 4 and 7). More specifically:

(a) Claim 2 has been recast in independent form to include all limitations of its base claim 1. Additionally, claim 2 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 3 (which has likewise been indicated as allowable, subject to certain provisos), which has been canceled for the sake of economy. Applicant notes that all formal objections to claims 1 and 3 have been addressed in the process of incorporating the subject matter of those claims into amended claim 2. Accordingly, claim 2, as amended, is now in a condition for allowance.

(b) Claims 4, 5, 9, and 10 have been amended to now depend on claim 2 (rather than claim 1). As claim 2 is now allowable, claims 4, 5, 9, and 10 are allowable on the same basis as amended claim 2. Moreover, claims 4, 5, 9, and 10 include additional limitations that, in combination with the limitations of amended claim 2, render those claims further distinct and nonobvious over the references of record. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 9, and 10, as amended, are now in a condition for allowance.

(c) Claim 6 has been recast in independent form to include all limitations of its base claim 1. Applicant notes that all formal objections to claim 1 have been addressed in the process of incorporating the subject matter of claim 1 into amended claim 6. Accordingly, claim 6, as amended, is now in a condition for allowance.

(d) Claim 7 is dependent on claim 4, and is therefore allowable on the same basis

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as claim 4. Moreover, claim 7 includes additional limitations that, in combination with the limitations of claim 4, render that claim further distinct and nonobvious over the references of record. Accordingly, claim 7 is now in a condition for allowance.

(e) Claim 8 is dependent on claim 7, and is therefore allowable on the same basis as claim 7. Moreover, claim 8 includes additional limitations that, in combination with the limitations of claim 7, render that claim further distinct and nonobvious over the references of record. Accordingly, claim 7 is now in a condition for allowance.

Claim 12 has been indicated as allowable, subject to curing of the formal objections to that claim. As the present amendments to claim 12 cure all formal objections, claim 12 is now in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, claims 2, 4-10, and 12 are now in a condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, passing of this case is now in order. Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's agent by telephone if such communication may be helpful in the further examination of this case. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

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On _____
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Respectfully submitted,

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